



**BC Centre for Disease Control**  
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Provincial TB Services  
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# Communicable Disease Control Manual

## Chapter 4: Tuberculosis

### Appendix C: Collection of Specimens for TB Testing



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## APPENDIX C: COLLECTION OF SPECIMENS FOR TB TESTING

To access information about specimen collection, handling and transport instructions, or ordering, submitting and processing information of specimens for Mycobacteriology examination, contact BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (BCCDC PHL) Mycobacteriology/TB laboratory at 604-707-2630 or review the [eLab Handbook](#).

The [PHSA Mycobacteriology/TB Requisition](#) forms can be found in the [eLab Handbook](#).

Below are instructions on how to search the eLab Handbook for Mycobacteriology-specific information:

The screenshot shows the eLab Handbook search interface. On the left, there is a search sidebar with a search box containing 'mycobacterium' (marked with a red circle '2'). Below the search box are radio buttons for search conditions: 'Name(s)', 'Anywhere', 'Start', and 'Exact'. A 'Reset' button is at the bottom of the sidebar. The main content area has a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Tests', and 'Log off / Sign In As Different User'. A 'LABS' button is in the top right. The main heading is 'Welcome to eLab Handbook' (marked with a red circle '1'). Below this is a dropdown menu for 'Choose your home lab:' set to 'BCCDC Public Health Laboratory'. A paragraph of introductory text follows. Under 'Available test information', it lists 'Currently the tests from the following Lower Mainland Labs (LM Labs) are available for viewing:' with two bullet points: 'BC Children's & Women's Hospital Laboratory' and 'BC Centre for Disease Control Public Health Laboratory'. Below this, a table shows search results. The text 'Total records returned: 7' (marked with a red circle '3') is above the table. The table has columns for Lab, Test Name, Division, Section, and Last Changed. The results list various tests from BCCDC, including Tuberculosis Interferon Gamma Release Assays, MIRU VNTR, NAT (TB NAT), Mycobacterium avium complex NAT (MAC NAT), Mycobacteria tuberculosis Sputum Smear and Culture, Mycobacterium tuberculosis Non-Sputum Smear and Culture, Mycobacteria Culture Identification, and Leprosy.

Lab	Test Name	Division	Section	Last Changed
BCCDC	<a href="#">Tuberculosis Interferon Gamma Release Assays</a>	Zoonotic Diseases and Emerging Pathogens	Not Assigned	23-Jul-19
BCCDC	<a href="#">MIRU VNTR</a>	Mycobacteriology/TB	Not Assigned	07-Jun-19
BCCDC	<a href="#">Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex NAT (TB NAT), Mycobacterium avium complex NAT (MAC NAT)</a>	Mycobacteriology/TB	Not Assigned	05-Mar-19
BCCDC	<a href="#">Mycobacteria tuberculosis Sputum Smear and Culture</a>	Mycobacteriology/TB	Not Assigned	31-May-18
BCCDC	<a href="#">Mycobacterium tuberculosis Non-Sputum Smear and Culture</a>	Mycobacteriology/TB	Not Assigned	31-May-18
BCCDC	<a href="#">Mycobacteria Culture Identification</a>	Mycobacteriology/TB	Not Assigned	31-May-18
BCCDC	<a href="#">Leprosy</a>	Mycobacteriology/TB	Not Assigned	12-Mar-18



No.	Field	Instruction
1	Choose your home lab	Select "BCCDC Public Health Laboratory" from drop-down menu
2	SEARCH FOR TEST	Type "mycobacterium" and select "Go"
3	Test Name	Choose appropriate test from records returned

For consultation or discussion of specific laboratory tests or results, the TB Nurse Consultants can be contacted regarding sputum specimen collection, at 604-707-5678. Questions regarding the collection of all other specimens can be directed to the BCCDC PHL at 604-707-2630.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR COLLECTION

- **All** specimens must be submitted in sterile, screw-cap leak-proof containers. Ensure that the specimen container is tightly closed. **Leaking specimens will not be processed.** Do not use caps containing cardboard liners (will soak up the specimen).
- Specimen containers must be labeled legibly.
- Submit one specimen container **per** biohazard bag. Each bag must contain a requisition in the **side pocket** that includes **two** patient identifiers (e.g., full name, date of birth) that are **identical** to the patient information on the specimen container. If possible, provide a brief summary of patient history and findings on the laboratory requisition. This information may be important for the assessment of significance of [nontuberculous mycobacteria \(NTM\)](#) isolates.
- Specimens for mycobacterial culture must not be submitted in alcohol, formalin, or other preservative.
- When specimens are sent for histopathology examination, at least one additional specimen should be collected/submitted appropriately for mycobacterial culture (i.e., not submitted in alcohol, formalin, or other preservative).
- Gastric lavage fluid, lymph node or other tissue biopsy samples, sputum or urine specimens should be refrigerated at 4°C (except blood culture and cerebrospinal fluid specimens) before and during transport to the laboratory.
- Specimens or samples suspected of containing *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* must be transported as **Category B, Type P650** packaging. Refer to regulations for [Transport of Dangerous Goods](#).